

# Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No.02/21

Date: 28 January 2021

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment  
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Purpose:** To inform Members of the year on year comparison of fly tipping data after the introduction of bulky waste charging from 1 April 2016.

---

## Background

Under the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, a council can charge residents for the collection (but not disposal) of domestic household waste items – typically furniture and appliances - that:

- do not fit in a cylindrical container 750mm in diameter and 1m in length and/or
- weigh more than 25kg

Fees for Bulky waste have varied over the years:

- 2015/16 one free collection of up to three items per household in any rolling 12-month period; then £19 per collection of up to three items over this allocation.
- 2016/17 £20 charge per collection of up to three bulky waste items, unlimited in number of collections.
- 2017/18 £20 charge per collection of up to three bulky waste items, unlimited in number of collections.
- 2018/19 £21 charge per collection of up to three bulky waste items, unlimited in number of collections.
- 2019/20 the charge was reduced to £10 per collection of up to three bulky waste items, unlimited in number of collections.
- 2020/21 the charge reverted to £21 per collection of up to three bulky waste items, unlimited in number of collections.

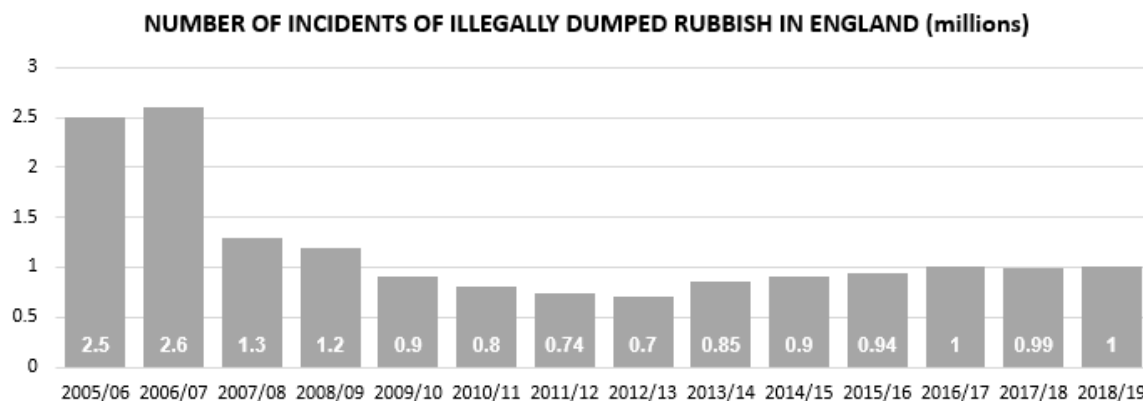
Prior to 1 April 2016, Medway was the only authority in Kent to offer free bulky collections to all households.

Medway has three household waste and recycling centres whereby residents can take and dispose of all items collected under the bulky waste service. Additionally, Medway's third sector partners will collect reusable furniture that can be resold.

A national research paper published in 2011, *'Introducing charges for bulky waste collection? What to consider – a guide for local authorities in England'*<sup>1</sup> found that fluctuations in fly tipping could be affected by a number of unrelated factors and policies that act independently but at the same time as a change to a bulky service, such as:

- the banning of side waste
- increased enforcement action
- greater emphasis on third sector activity
- recession

However, as shown below, during a 8-year period from 2005 when it is estimated a further 9% of collection authorities moved to a charging system, fly tipping incidents decreased significantly. Since 2012/13, the number of fly-tipping incidents has generally been increasing year-on-year, until 2016/17 when it has then remained relatively stable.



Many local authorities have changed the way they capture and report fly-tips over the past few years, so the changes over time should be interpreted with some care. Defra is also aware that the definitions used to describe fly-tips in the guidance are interpreted broadly by local authorities.

<sup>1</sup> Introducing charges for bulky waste collections. Caroline Lee-Smith, Sept 2011; <http://www.bulkyguru.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Introducing-charges-on-bulky-waste-collections.pdf>

## Validation of data by Government

All Local Authorities have to complete a Government return on waste information e.g. landfill, recycling and fly tipping at least quarterly. This data is then reviewed by Defra and then validated.

Data in this briefing note up to 2018/19 has been validated by Defra. 2019/20 onwards has not yet been validated.

## Advice and analysis

There are many different types of fly tipping. Some are single items such as mattress or items of furniture, which can easily be identified as 'bulky waste'. Others are more complex and made up of a variety of items, more in line with house clearances by disreputable waste clearance firms/individuals or commercial waste. Medway Council takes a strong enforcement stance towards those who fly tip.

AREA	2015/16	2016/17	% Change 15/16 to 16/17	2017/18	% Change 16/17 to 17/18	2018/19	% Change 17/18 to 18/19	2019/20	% Change 18/19 to 19/20
<b>Medway</b>	<b>3,559</b>	<b>3,637</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3,525</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>5,141</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>5,713</b>	<b>11%</b>
England	941,896	1,011,199	7%	997,553	-1%	1,072,431	8%	N/A	-
South East	69,315	79,911	15%	79,307	-1%	83,752	6%	N/A	-

During 2018/19 and 2019/20 there has been an increased emphasis within the Environmental Enforcement Team on proactive clearance of fly tipping, with two in house fly-tipping removal vehicles in addition to the services offered by the waste collection contractor. This has led to cleaner streets, but also conversely a higher level of fly tipping reports due to our proactive stance.

Although Medway has the highest volume of fly tipping in Kent, the table below shows that when comparing the rate of fly tipping per 1,000 population across all Kent authorities, Medway ranks 4<sup>th</sup> out of 13 for 2018/19 data. Data is not available for other authorities at this time for 2019/20.\*see above

Kent Authorities	Number of Fly Tipping Incidents	Population*	Rate of fly tipping per 1,000 population	Rank
Dartford	2,446	109,709	22.3	1
Gravesham	2,240	106,385	21.1	2
Swale	2,789	148,519	18.8	3
<b>Medway</b>	<b>5,141</b>	<b>277,855</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>4</b>
Thanet	1,918	141,819	13.5	5
Ashford	1,465	129,281	11.3	6
Maidstone	1,634	169,955	9.6	7
Folkestone and Hythe	955	112,578	8.5	8
Dover	948	116,969	8.1	9
Canterbury	1,197	164,553	7.3	10
Sevenoaks	732	120,293	6.1	11
Tonbridge and Malling	585	130,508	4.5	12
Tunbridge Wells	NO DATA	118,054		

\* Population estimates UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland MID 2018 - ONS 25 June 2019

The table below shows the annual percentage changes year on year up to 2018/19 (19/20 data is not available at this time). For the change from 2017/18 to 2018/19, Medway ranks as having the second highest increase of cases at 46%, behind Maidstone with a 57% increase.

Kent Authorities	2015/16	2016/17	% Change 15/16 to 16/17	2017/18	% Change 16/17 to 17/18	2018/19	% Change 17/18 to 18/19
Maidstone	796	973	22.2%	1,041	7.0%	1,634	57.0%
<b>Medway</b>	<b>3,559</b>	<b>3,637</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>3,525</b>	<b>-3.1%</b>	<b>5,141</b>	<b>45.8%</b>
Folkestone and Hythe	1,082	1,178	8.9%	746	-36.7%	955	28.0%
Ashford	800	856	7.0%	1,249	45.9%	1,465	17.3%
Tonbridge and Malling	505	648	28.3%	507	-21.8%	585	15.4%
Canterbury	1,299	1,035	-20.3%	1,044	0.9%	1,197	14.7%
Swale	2,966	3,243	9.3%	2,610	-19.5%	2,789	6.9%
Gravesham	2,258	2,249	-0.4%	2,122	-5.6%	2,240	5.6%
Dartford	1,961	1,609	-18.0%	2,366	47.0%	2,446	3.4%
Thanet	1,617	1,776	9.8%	1,940	9.2%	1,918	-1.1%
Dover	1,125	1,100	-2.2%	1,077	-2.1%	948	-12.0%
Sevenoaks	883	930	5.3%	852	-8.4%	732	-14.1%
Tunbridge Wells	696	704	1.1%	819	16.3%	NO DATA	

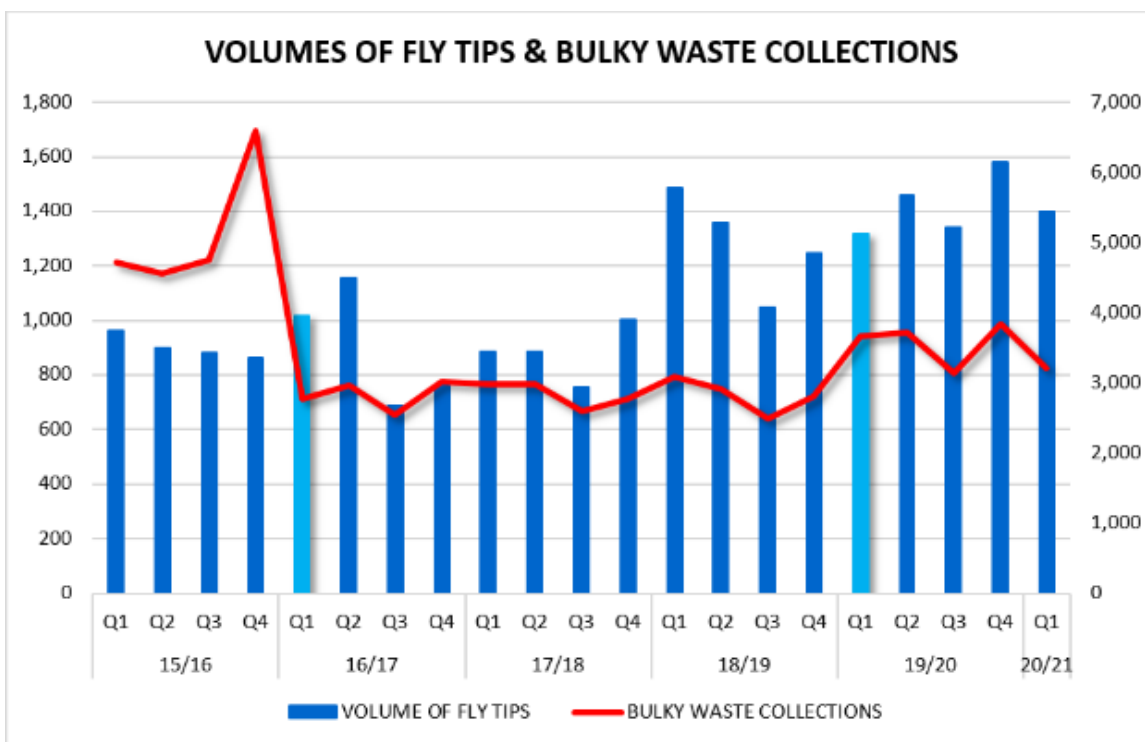
The table below compares the Defra fly tipping categories for those items which could have received a bulky waste collection by type for 2015/16 to 2019/20.

'Other Household' could include the results for house or shed clearances, old furniture, carpets and the waste from small scale DIY works.

Defra Category	2015/16	2016/17	% Change 15/16 to 16/17	2017/18	% Change 16/17 to 17/18	2018/19	% Change 17/18 to 18/19	2019/20	% Change 18/19 to 19/20
White Goods	329	292	-11.2%	285	-2.4%	453	58.9%	475	4.9%
Other electrical	223	166	-25.6%	105	-36.7%	140	33.3%	143	2.1%
Other household	1,951	1,861	-4.6%	2,235	20.1%	3,192	42.8%	3,791	18.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,503</b>	<b>2,319</b>	<b>-7.4%</b>	<b>2,625</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>3,785</b>	<b>44.2%</b>	<b>4,409</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

The table below compares bulky waste collection numbers with data from 2015/16 to 2019/20. Charges for all bulky collection items was introduced during 2016/17.

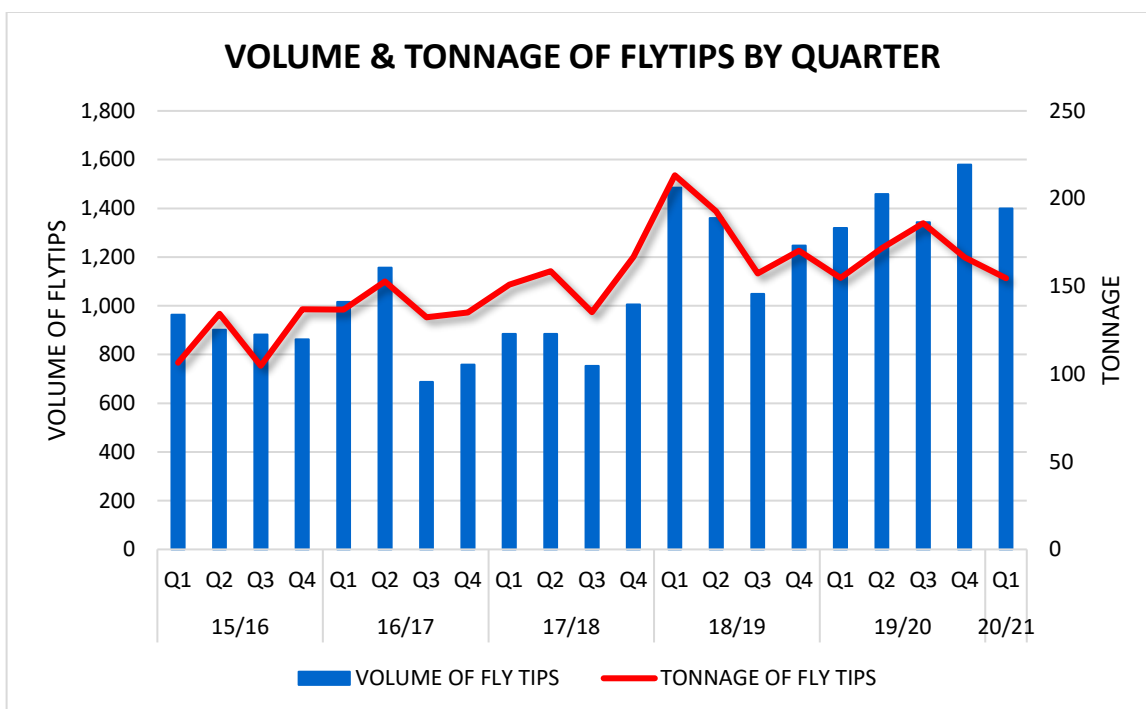
QUARTER	2015/16	2016/17	% Change 15/16 to 16/17	2017/18	% Change 16/17 to 17/18	2018/19	% Change 17/18 to 18/19	2019/20	% Change 18/19 to 19/20
Q1	4,720	2,772	-41.3%	2,979	7.5%	3,087	3.6%	3,664	18.7%
Q2	4,558	2,962	-35.0%	2,985	0.8%	2,918	-2.2%	3,712	27.2%
Q3	4,744	2,545	-46.4%	2,593	1.9%	2,483	-4.2%	3,137	26.3%
Q4	6,592	3,012	-54.3%	2,776	-7.8%	2,798	0.8%	3,844	37.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,614</b>	<b>11,291</b>	<b>-45.2%</b>	<b>11,333</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>11,286</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>	<b>14,357</b>	<b>27.2%</b>



Q1 16/17 - April - £20.00 charge for bulky waste collection introduced

Q1 19/20 - April - Charge for bulky waste reduced to £10

Q1 20/21 - Suspension of fridge and freezer collections due to COVID 19 reducing bulky waste collections



Members requested heat maps for the number of incidents of fly tipping and yearly comparisons. These are attached at the end of this briefing note.

### COVID Q1 2020/21

During Q1 2020/21 we had total lockdown across the Country. Many local authorities in the press have been reporting significantly increased levels of fly-tipping. Early indications were this was not the case in Medway. The tonnage of fly tipping incidents for Q1 2020/21 was not significantly different from that reported in 2019/20. Please note this data has not been validated and these are indicative numbers at this time.

Q1 20/21 - Suspension of fridge and freezer collections due to COVID 19 reducing bulky waste collections were between 26/03/20 and 25/05/20

### Conclusion

Despite the significantly reduced costs of the bulky waste collection services; 2019/20 saw an increase in the volume of fly tipping. This supports previous trends and briefing notes that have shown there is no link between bulky waste charging and fly tipping (ref: briefing note to RCE OS Committee dated 13 June 2017).

### Lead officers:

Sarah Valdus - Head of Environmental Services - 01634 331597

[sarah.valdus@medway.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.valdus@medway.gov.uk)

James Brown – Head of Regulatory Services

[james.brown@medway.gov.uk](mailto:james.brown@medway.gov.uk)

Anna Marie Lawrence - Head of RCE Business Intelligence - 01634 332406

[annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk](mailto:annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk)

